

EMERGENCY RESPONSES TO HAZARDOUS INCIDENTS 1735

(November 1991)

The department requires that employees be informed of special hazards to their life and safety. These hazards include those that CAL FIRE personnel may encounter during emergency operations.

EMERGENCY HAZARD ALERT

1735.1

(November 1991)

Hazardous conditions found during an emergency incident should be marked with yellow and black safety tape to protect employees from injury. These hazards include electrical hazards, mine shafts, cliffs, hazardous materials, etc. Department vehicles will carry a minimum of 100 yards of such tape.

When identifying an immediate threat to life, a person must presume, that in the absence of safety markings or guard personnel, no one else is aware of the hazard. Therefore, the individual must notify work group members and the immediate supervisor of the hazardous condition as soon as possible.

The supervisor will:

- Station sufficient personnel to secure the hazardous areas from entry by firefighters and the public.
- Immediately request the ECC to alert all units assigned to the fire.
- Request the utility company to shut off power if an electrical hazard is present.
- As soon as possible, flag the perimeter of the hazardous area with a continuous yellow and black barricade of safety tape at a minimum distance of 25 feet from the hazard and at greater distances wherever possible.
- Prevent personnel from entering the hazardous area until a responsible official takes charge. In the case of an electrical powerline, confirm that the power is shut off and that powerlines are grounded.

When notified of a special hazard to life and safety, the ECC will follow the appropriate procedure as outlined in the Command and Control Handbook, [8100p500 Life/Safety Alert.](#)

TRAFFIC CONTROL

1735.2

(November 1991)

Traffic control is a primary function of law enforcement agencies; however, CAL FIRE does have a responsibility to warn motorists of a smoke or flame hazard resulting from a wildfire adjoining a public roadway or from other CAL FIRE activities. Certain conditions, such as containment of a fire or the absence of adequate law enforcement authority, may justify department employees giving some attention to traffic control.

Department employees engaged in traffic control during hours of darkness or periods of restricted visibility will use lights, highway flares, or other similar devices in a location which allows a light or glow to be visible to approaching motorists from a distance of at least 500 feet. Yellow flasher warning lights are preferable for such use.

CLOSURE OF PUBLIC ROADS

1735.3

(November 1991)

CAL FIRE peace officers have the authority to close public highways or roads in the event of a fire or other disaster. Section 2812 of the Vehicle Code, however, requires immediate notification of the location and the reason for the closing to the governmental agency having control over the highway.

EVACUATION OF FIRE AREAS

1735.4

(November 1991)

CAL FIRE peace officers may close areas where a calamity, such as a flood, storm, fire, earthquake, explosion, accident, or other disaster, threatens public health or safety [Penal Code, Sec. 409.5 (a)]. This authority gives CAL FIRE peace officers the right to evacuate fire areas when necessary. CAL FIRE peace officers should only exercise this authority when there is an imminent threat to human life and when the proper law enforcement agency is not immediately available.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENTS

1735.5

(November 1991)

SCHEDULE A OPERATIONS

1735.5.1

(November 1991)

When local contracts exist, the degree of CAL FIRE employee involvement will depend upon local hazardous materials response program policies. CAL FIRE involvement will also depend upon the employment of a knowledgeable staff, the degree of employee training, and the availability of personal protection. Under no circumstances will local government require CAL FIRE participation in a hazardous materials program when the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 8 requirements are not met or when qualified occupational health leadership is not available.

SCHEDULE B OPERATIONS

1735.5.2

(November 1991)

In responding to the incidents described below, the primary objective is to save life and property from fire, not to aid in clean-up procedures.

When there is no fire or threat to life, the crew shall not participate in hazardous materials clean-up or handling procedures. Other jurisdictions, CALTRANS for example, have this responsibility and should provide the needed service.

In responding to hazardous material fires (including fires emanating from spills) with no threat to life, the crew will fight the fire carefully by staying upwind away from airborne toxics including smoke, etc. This practice may result in fire containment well away from the fire source. If there is any possibility of getting into the smoke, firefighters must use turnouts and breathing apparatus.

When there is fire and/or threat to life, the crew will first identify the materials involved to make sure that the protective equipment is adequate for toxic exposures. When there is doubt regarding hazardous materials, the Emergency Command Center can provide assistance with material hazard identification. If protective gear is adequate, the minimum number of fully protected employees necessary should begin evacuation or rescue procedures. Personnel should conduct firefighting operations carefully to minimize employee exposure to airborne or spilled contaminants.

[\(see next section\)](#)

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[\(see Forms or Forms Samples\)](#)